

Healthcare Connect Fund

On December 12, 2012 the FCC created the Healthcare Connect Fund (HCCF) to expand access by health care providers to robust broadband networks. Building on lessons learned from 50 Pilot projects testing how to most effectively use broadband to improve the quality and reduce costs of health care in rural areas, the HCCF reforms modernize the FCC's existing universal service Rural Health Care Program to expand the benefits of telemedicine nationwide.

Goals of Healthcare Connect Fund

- Increase access to broadband for health care providers (HCPs), especially those serving rural areas
- Foster development and deployment of broadband health care networks
- Maximize cost-effectiveness of the FCC's universal service health care program

Health Care Benefits for Consumers

- Access by rural HCPs to medical specialists at larger HCPs through telemedicine
- Enhanced exchange of electronic health records and coordination of patient care
- Remote training of medical personnel
- Improved quality and lower cost of health care

Key Features of New Healthcare Connect Fund

- Supports broadband connectivity and broadband networks for HCPs
- Encourages use of consortium to save costs, expand access to health care resources
- Provides **65% discount on broadband services**, equipment, connections to research and education networks, HCP-constructed and owned facilities if shown to be the most cost-effective option
- Requires a **35% HCP contribution**
- Funding begins January 1, 2014 (July 1, 2013, for existing Pilot projects)

Who is eligible to participate?

- Public or not-for-profit hospitals, rural health clinics, community health centers, health centers serving migrants, community mental health centers, local health departments or agencies, post-secondary educational institutions/teaching hospitals/medical schools, or a consortia of the above
- Non-rural HCPs may participate in Healthcare Connect Fund if they belong to a consortium that has a majority rural HCPs
- The largest HCPs (400 + patient beds) are eligible, but support is capped if non-rural.

Skilled Nursing Facilities Pilot Program

- New Pilot will test how to support broadband connections for skilled nursing facilities.
- Pilot will get underway in 2014.
- Funding will be up to \$50 million total over a three-year period

Funding Caps

- Cap on total funding for FCC Rural Health Care Programs, including Healthcare Connect Fund and Skilled Nursing Facilities Pilot, is \$400 million annually.
- Cap for upfront payments in Healthcare Connect Fund is \$150 million annually

Links

- Healthcare Connect Fund order: www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-releases-healthcare-connect-order
- FCC website, www.fcc.gov/health
- Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC) website, www.usac.org/rhc
- FCC RHC Pilot Program Map, <http://www.fcc.gov/maps/rural-health-care-pilot-program>
- FCC RHC Pilot Program – Selected Participants, <http://www.usac.org/rhcp/about/participants.aspx>

Healthcare Connect Fund First Steps: Phase I - includes existing USAC account holders. An officer, director or authorized employee that may legally and financially sign on behalf of the HCP site or facilities(s) signs the forms listed below.

To-do: to join the HICKRC Consortium and begin the process of receiving reduced broadband services.

Go to the following website www.maine.gov/hit/ and complete and return to Lorie.Smith@maine.gov the Consortium Membership documents listed below, due date: **January 30, 2014**

1. **Letter of Agency (LOA)** template with instructions – sign/date/scan - return
2. **Legal and Financial Form Agreement** – sign/date/scan - return
3. **Third Party Agreement (TPA)** – sign/date/scan - return

Once the Consortium Membership documents are received; instructions on additional information will be requested for filing USAC Form 460.

- **Form 460 Explained** document and **F460 Data Field Requirements** provide a preview of information required for filing F460.
 - Baseline Technical Assessment (Survey)
- Frequently Asked Questions ([FAQs](#)) about Healthcare Connect Fund (HCF)

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